

The Jefferson County Court House
Oskaloosa
Jefferson County
Kansas

HABS No. KANS-19

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
120 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

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44-05KA
1-HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

JEFFERSON COUNTY COURT HOUSE

Street Address: Oskaloosa, Jefferson County, Kansas

Present Owner: Jefferson County, Kansas

Present Occupant: None

Present Use: Jefferson County administrative offices and court.

Brief Statement of Significance: This post-Civil War building has an interesting and decorative architectural treatment and is the oldest courthouse still in use in Kansas.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Jefferson County, Kansas.
2. Date of erection: 1867 (a plaque in the downstairs hall reads "Erected 1867 A.D., Graham and Swain, Builders").
3. Architect, builder, suppliers, etc.: The architect was E. D. Baldwin who prepared the plan and specifications. The builders were Graham and Swain of Kansas, Missouri (per County Clerk in an interview June 23, 1958).
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: None located (look in records of the County Clerk).
5. Notes on alterations and additions: The courtroom has recently been remodeled, but the size of the room was unchanged (per County Clerk in an interview June 23, 1958).
6. Important old view: None located.

B. Historical Events: (No research on this.)

- C. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: Records of the County Clerk.

Prepared by J. C. Noffsinger date 7/58

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: This building is designed in an interesting variation of the Victorian style and is the oldest surviving courthouse in Kansas still in use.
2. Condition of Fabric: The building is in fair condition; some of the wooden brackets are loose and there are many cracks in the stone lintels and bricks. There does not seem to be a great concern over maintenance.

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Foundation: Native stone.
2. Wall Construction: Brick walls have the column and beam facings slightly projecting, thus forming panels for window and door placements. White stone quoins are utilized. Ornate metal tie rod end plates are exposed on the brick surface. The brick is laid up in common bond.
3. Porches, etc.: None.
4. Chimneys: One large modern chimney has been recently added to the west facade.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The doorways have ornamental wood trim painted white (see photo) and stone thresholds. The doors are panelled wood with a large glass area. The tympanum is made up of three panes of glass.

- b. Windows and shutters: First floor windows have eight (8) panes and are sash type. The second floor windows have twelve (12) panes and are sash type. The ornamental arches are of stone as are the lintels. No shutters.

6. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Shape not determined. Now covered with modern asphalt shingles. Originally, it was to be a self-supporting shingle roof (per interview with the County Clerk, June 23, 1958). There is a large wooden cupola on roof (see photo).
- b. Cornice, eaves: Classical cornice with dentials and pairs of brackets all of wood and painted white.
- c. Dormers: None.

C. Technical Description of Interiors:

- 1. Floor Plans: The plan of the first story was to include six offices, two private rooms, five fireproof vaults, and a hall 10' wide with two stairways at one end. The second floor was to have one large court room and two jury rooms.
- 2. Stairways: Two stairways near the west wall on each side of the hall. New treads have recently been added. (180° turn in twelve (12) feet of height. See photo.)
- 3. Flooring: Original wood floor is preserved in some offices, but the hallway and other areas have new flooring.
- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Original plastered walls have been painted and repaired.

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5. Doorways and doors: Original wooden frames and wood panelled doors are still in place but are heavily painted. Original vault doors and frames of heavy metal construction.
6. Trim: Original simple wooden trim remains.
7. Hardware: Original hardware exists on most of the doors.
8. Lighting: No original lighting remains.
9. Heating (fireplaces, stoves, central): Original stoves have been removed.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: In a courthouse square with doors facing east and west.
2. Enclosures: Brick and stone wall about the square.
3. Outbuildings: None.
4. Walks, driveways, etc.: Stone walks lead to front and back doors.
5. Landscaping: Several trees exist in courthouse square.